Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hour appointed for private members' business having expired, the house will now resume the business which was interrupted at five o'clock.

PENSIONS

PROVISION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY PROGRAM

The house resumed consideration in committee of the following resolution—Miss LaMarsh—Mr. Lamoureux in the chair:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure, to be known as the Canada pension plan, to establish a comprehensive program of old age pensions in Canada payable to contributors, and to provide, among other things, for the payment of retirement pensions beginning at any age between 65 and 70 years; for the payment of pensions to surviving spouses beginning at any age from 65 years; for the progressive establishment of full pensions over an initial period of 10 years; for the co-ordination of pensions payable under the Old Age Security Act with pensions payable under the Canada pension plan and for the payment of adjusted pensions under the Old Age Security Act beginning at any age from 65 years; and to provide further that all expenditures under the Canada pension plan, including costs of administration, shall be financed from contributions by employees, employers and self employed persons.

The Chairman: It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Monteith: Mr. Chairman, at five o'clock I had barely commenced my remarks on this resolution but I had expressed my regret at the Prime Minister's not having acceded to my suggestion that a committee study the bill prior to its having second reading. I had also mentioned that I thought a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons would be an appropriate body to give the bill the necessary examination. I have done a great deal of reading on this matter over the last several days, some of which favoured the plan, some critical of it. I have reread the speech of the minister on July 18 last when she introduced the resolution which was supposed to herald the panacea of all pension legislation. It made very interesting reading. I expect the minister has learned that it is wise to make haste slowly.

We all remember, Mr. Chairman, the budget speech of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon) last June. No one ever delivered a greater political diatribe than he did that night. Then last night, while all was not sweetness and light, there was some change in attitude. I am not going to get into a budget debate but I cannot help but recall how that previous effort fell completely apart. We shall have to see what happens to his latest effort. I am sure the hon. lady has taken a leaf out of the book of the Minister of Finance but gone one step further. On July 18 last she went out of her way to insinuate all sorts of political motives to the opposition, just as had the Minister of Finance. I suggest that the minister reread her speech of that date. Probably she has done so very recently.

Miss LaMarsh: I read it every morning.

Mr. Monteith: It shows how vulnerable, Mr. Chairman, one can be when he or she undertakes to be the know-all and end-all on any subject, let alone a subject as complex as pensions. Today, Mr. Chairman, the minister has shown complete control and presented her statement in a quiet and sober manner, for which I congratulate her. However, I doubt whether this transformation can be permanent.

The minister, in the short space of less than eight months, has had to take back so much of what she said on that previous occasion that it seems incomprehensible that she stand here today and expect the House of Commons and Canadians to accept her statements as anything approaching the last word on the subject. The minister's experience since undertaking the responsibilities of this portfolio has surely taught her to move less hurriedly and less blindly than in the past. Probably the most glaring example of her reversing of position is that the taxpayer is now paying something like $100 million more in income taxes per year to pay the $10 increase in old age security. This was supposed to be paid out of the Canada pension plan. And by the way, those elder citizens now receiving that extra $10 can thank the Leader of the Opposition for forcing the government to keep their election promises, and not delay as they would otherwise have done.

In her July 18 speech the minister intimated several times that action which we had taken in this field was for votes. I would say to her that the largest share of our social welfare legislation was brought in early in our regime and that we kept our election promises. I would also say to the hon. lady that if anyone has been vote conscious in any piece of legislation which has been brought before this country, she deserves the highest marks. It is strange indeed, Mr. Chairman, how a speech can be made on a resolution such as that of the minister on July 18 last, and then such a different approach takes